

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0480

COMIDEASTFOR

COM 7TH FLT

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 4111

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, IN, US

SUBJ: SHADOWING OF INDIAN SHIPS

1. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH DCM MARCH 21 AND POL COUNSELOR MARCH 26, MEA JOINT SECRETARY (AMERICAS) TEJA RAISED THE ALLEGED CLOSE SURVEILLANCE OF THE INS DARSHAK, A GOI OCEANOGRAPHIC VESSEL, IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1974. TEJA HANDED POL COUNSELOR FOLLOWING NOTE ON ALLEGED INCIDENTS:

BEGIN QUOTE: INS DARSHAK, WHILE ENGAGED IN AN OCEANOGRAPHIC EXPEDITION IN THE ARABIAN SEA, EAST OF MUSCAT AND OMAN HAS REPORTED THE FOLLOWING INCIDENTS BETWEEN 10 JANUARY AND 11 FEBRUARY 1974:

(A) A US MARITIME AIRCRAFT (ORION) BEARING NO PA 152756 MADE A PASSING RUN ON EITHER SIDE OF INS DARSHAK AT A HEIGHT OF ABOUT 1,000 FEET AT 1450 HRS ON 10 JANUARY 1974 WHEN THE SHIP WAS APPROXIMATELY 225 MILES SOUTHEAST OF MUSCAT.

(B) ANOTHER US NAVAL MARITIME AIRCRAFT (ORION) BEARING NO QA 154597 MADE 2 LOW PASSES CLOSE TO THE SHIP AT ABOUT 1415 HRS ON 11 JANUARY 1974, IN POSITION APPROXIMATELY 250 MILES SOUTHEAST OF MUSCAT.

(C) AT ABOUT 1021 HRS ON 13 JANUARY 1974, THE SAME US NAVAL

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AIRCRAFT AS IN (B) ABOVE FLEW ALMOST OVERHEAD AT A HEIGHT OF

500 FEET.

(C) AT ABOUT 1110 HRS ON 9 FEBRUARY, ANOTHER MARITIME AIR-CRAFT (ORION) WITH NAVAL INSIGNIA BEARING NO QA 154592 APPROACHED FROM NORTHWARDS AND REMAINED IN THE VICINITY OF THE SHIP FOR 30 MINUTES MAKING 7 LOW LEVEL PASSES NEAR THE SHIP AT A HEIGHT OF ABOUT 500 FEET.

(E) ON 11 FEBRUARY 1974, 2 US NAVAL SHIPS CONSISTING OF A TANKER (MISPILLION) AND A GUIDED MISSILE DESTROYER ESCORT (SCHOFIELD) APPROACHED DARSHAK FROM SOUTHWEST IN APPROXIMATE POSITION 30 MILES EAST OF THE COAST OF MUSCAT AND OMAN. USS SCHOFIELD LATER CLOSED INS DARSHAK TO 2 MILES AT ABOUT 1120 HRS. THIS SHIP PRIOR TO CLOSING INS DARSHAK HAD DROPPED A MARKER BUOY IN THE SEA. BOTH THE SHIPS THEN PROCEEDED TO EASTWARD AND DISAPPEARED. END QUOTE.

2. TEJA TOLD DCM THERE HAD BEEN NO INCIDENTS BUT THAT GOI FELT THAT SUCH CLOSE SURVEILLANCE COULD BE CONSIDERED AS HARASSMENT OR, AT THE VERY LEAST, "INCONVENIENT", AND CONCEIVABLY COULD LEAD TO "SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES". HE SUGGESTED WE TRY TO FIND WAYS OF AVOIDING SUCH INCIDENTS. EMBOFFS TOLD TEJA WE WOULD LOOK INTO THE REPORTED SURVEILLANCE, NOTING IT WAS NORMAL PRACTICE FOR US VESSELS TO MAINTAIN INFORMATION ON OTHER VESSELS FROM OTHER NAVIES IN THE AREA. VESSELS WITH WHAT MIGHT BE UNUSUAL DECK OR SUPERSTRUCTURE CONFIGURATION, WHICH SOMETIMES THE CASE WITH OCEANOGRAPHIC SHIPS, MIGHT SOMETIMES BE GIVEN A CLOSER LOOK THAN WOULD OTHERWISE BE THE CASE.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE REPORT AND COMMENTS FROM COMIDEASTFOR. THE WHOLE MATTER HANDLED BY TEJA IN LOW KEY, AND WE WILL DECIDE WHAT, IF ANYTHING, TO TELL GOI AFTER RECEIVING REQUESTED INFORMATION.
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